

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 534

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Sergeant Dustin D. Laird of Martin.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Sergeant Dustin D. Laird, a courageous member of the Tennessee National Guard who gave his life in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, following in the patriotic tradition for which Martin, Weakley County, and the Volunteer State are renowned, Sergeant Dustin Laird was a brave and honorable member of the United States Army National Guard, 913th Engineer Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, based in Union City, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dustin Laird, who was twenty-four years of age, lost his life after his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device while on patrol near Rawah, Iraq, on July 31, 2006; and

WHEREAS, a 2001 graduate of Westview High School, Sergeant Dustin Laird was deployed to Iraq in September of 2005; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Laird was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and like thousands of others of this great nation's sons and daughters, Dustin Laird did not shrink from serving in combat; he believed in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to free the Iraqi people from the chains of injustice; and

WHEREAS, serving with great courage and gallantry, Sergeant Laird gave his life for his country and the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; and

WHEREAS, Dustin D. Laird's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of family, his fellow soldiers, and his country are exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear and stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, while he was serving in the Middle East, Caroline Coleman's fourth-grade class at Ridgmont Elementary School wrote pen-pal letters to Sergeant Laird; he repaid their kindness with a surprise visit in May of 2006, answering the children's many questions and telling them how proud he was of the work he was doing for his country; and

WHEREAS, Dustin Laird is survived by his father, Billy Laird, his mother, Linda Lutz, and will also be sorely missed by his brothers, Derek and Billy Laird, and sister, Heather Hale; and

WHEREAS, this valiant Tennessean leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly should pause to remember the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of this exceptional soldier and human being, the late Sergeant Dustin Laird, United States Army National Guard, whose loss is mourned by a grateful nation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Sergeant Dustin D. Laird, a man of impeccable character, limitless courage, and stalwart commitment to the defense of his nation as a member of the Tennessee National Guard, reflecting fondly upon his bravery and dedication to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and friends of Sergeant Dustin D. Laird.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.